

Love Letters From Europe



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York, England.

Royal Station Hotel

July 2, 1958.

- My darling darling Charlie,

We're in a huge - old fashioned - antiquated hotel, but we have a very comfortable room - by comfortable - I mean warm!!! We have twin beds - and they're quite snug - can't wait to crawl down under the covers.

Well - we left Edinburgh very reluctantly this morning. What a fabulous city it is - and what a wonderful time we had. Our room was right in the front - in a new modern part - we had our own bathroom - and great huge windows which jutted out into a small balcony - giving us a magnificent view of Edinburgh castle - Princes St - the gardens and Sir Walter Scott's memorial - We spent a half an hour every day just watching the city moving past - (from 5 floors above!)

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I'll backtrack, darling, up to the place where I left you in my last letter. I think we were in Dingwall - the dullest - dead town. We had terrible weather on that Thursday. It poured cats and dogs! We journeyed to a place called Ullapool on the West coast. The town is situated mainly on a flat finger of land which juts out on the Firth of Beoom. Along the sea shore are wharves - and tiny cobblestone streets. The houses are all stone and they are built right out on the sidewalk. There is no such thing as a front lawn or garden path! Ullapool is a fishing village and the most picturesque spot - with mountains sheltering the place on either side. We spent about two hours there. On the way to Dingwall we passed the most beautiful scenery. It rained all day so we unfortunately didn't get any pictures. That night - after supper - we watched British TV. Sae the Vera Lynn Show and a wonderful movie.

Then to Glencoe, the land of the MacDonalds. We followed a road which German prisoners built during the war - through mountain passes - up steep slopes and down again into the valley of Glencoe. What a lovely spot - mountains all around - as far as you can see. Then through the most desolated part of Scotland - to Tyndrum. Our bus driver said he'd never seen a sheep or a goat on the swamps and marshes, but that day we saw 8 wild deer.

Tyndrum was very gay!! There was one church, one garage, a couple of stores and cottages, and one hotel - The Royal. We planned a little mountain climbing that night but it was raining so hard, we decided to go to bed early. The TV was on the blink so we went to bed at 8:30 - and wrote home.

The next day we journeyed back to Edinburgh. We passed a lot of towns - none very interesting, and once we were near Edinburgh the scenery was cluttered with billboards etc. We were glad to get back tho', and when we saw our beautiful room,

we were on top of the world. The two stewards who said they were coming up to see us from Wates, came and we all had a great fun together. They took us out for dinner on Saturday and on Sunday we went to Loch Lomond. It was rather disappointing - after all we hear about it.

On Monday morning, we went on a city tour. Our conductor was wonderful - very friendly - and full of jokes. We visited the castle, St. Giles Cathedral, Hollyrood Castle - where the Queen is now on her visit to Scotland, John Knox's house, and the old town wall. I love Edinburgh.

That afternoon, Liz and I went shopping. I bought a Shetland sweater for DoDo, and a few odds and ends - charms, cards, small souvenirs. Bumped into Frogie Fraser and Murray Fraser on Princess St. I was so stunned when I first saw him I couldn't speak. It gives you a funny sensation to suddenly see someone you know in a strange country. The boys took us out for dinner and at 11:30, they left. Tuesday, we really had a mad crazy day. We rented a Ford Prefect and drove to Glasgow, and on to Helensburgh to visit some of Liz's relatives. Liz is used to an automatic shift - and I wish you could have seen the jerking away from corners - and jerking up hills. She didn't mind the left-hand drive, but putting the car into first from neutral was our one big dread. We avoided every light we could so we wouldn't have to stop. Then we were lost in Glasgow and had to stop and ask directions, then pull away, we just roared. Finally we made it to Helensburgh in one piece. We had lunch and tea there, then we planned our route back, this time avoiding Glasgow like the plague. What a terrible city, like a beehive and filthy dirty. We went back via Loch Lomond and arrived safely in Edinburgh. It was quite a day, our car was blue, and very comfy.

Today - we got up at 6:45. Got everything ready, had breakfast and Liz took the car back. I checked out and saw that our bags got on the right bus and met Liz a couple of blocks down. We settled on the bus at 8:45!

The scenery today hasn't been too exciting. We passed through some of the dearest towns - so quaint and picturesque. We drove through Newcastle, a city of \$125,000, and very busy, and cityish. Then on to Durham to visit Durham Cathedral - started by the Romans in 1093 and finished 150 years later. It is fantastic, beautiful, and very awful. A boys choir was practising while we were there and the singing resounded through such a huge and magnificent place gave me the shivers.

We arrived in York about 6:00. Liz and I are tired and we don't know why - we sit all day - and by nighttime, we're both yawning, and just dying to get into bed. After a delicious supper, we walked through the streets to the Cathedral and back along the city wall. We've never seen such quaintness, pubs, antique shops, cafes, timbered cobblestone streets. The shops are all nice. Lovely things in all the windows. We're furious that we can't stay tomorrow. Really darling, this town is just all that you imagine when you read about a small English town.

Darling. I think about you constantly. I put my head back, close my eyes and dream about us together. I dream about our bodies united. I think about your job. I wonder what you are doing and I miss you so much. If you were only with me, darling. In your letter, be sure and tell me all about your admittance into school. I must get some sleep ow sweetie. I'll be dreaming about you.

I love you with all my heart.
Yours always and forever,

Ann

Domus Hotel
Stockholm Sweden
July 13, 1958

My darling, darling love.

It hardly seems possible that we've been over here for over a month and we've already seen three countries and three major cities - Edinburgh, London and Oslo. Really - when I wrote Stockholm, Sweden above, I had to pause for a minute and catch my breath.

I think the last time I wrote, we were spending our last night in the Museum - the Imperial Hotel in other words. We haven't had another quite like it again and we're all hoping we never will.

The next day, which was Monday, we left London at 9:30 by train. We left the city without second glances, or even a word or two about leaving. London is so big, so cold, and so overwhelming that you couldn't possibly take in or absorb any atmosphere. We found the taxi drivers rude, the hotel staff rude - even shop keepers and clerks didn't give a hoot. Through all this, darling, It was a wonderful thrill to stand on the corner of Piccadilly Circus and talk to a Bobbie - also Trafalgar Square and Buckingham Palace, and 10 Downing Street - wonderful!

Our train ride was uneventful. English trains smell to high heavens - and you feel as tho' you've been working in a coal bin all week when you get off. The people on our train are awfully nice. We've made good friends with Barb Stanley and Irene "somebody" - and our Canadian pal Joyce MacEwen. Barb and Irene are both about 26 or 27 and they are lots of fun. Barb is very matter of fact. Swears like a trooper and is liable to say anything, while Irene is as dry as she can be. She bought a Norwegian sweater the other day, and we never heard the end of her displeasure. We were nearly hysterical on the bus driving into Oslo, while she sat there fingering every inch to see if there were flaws. It's hard to give you an idea of her type of humor through the one rather measly example - but she is dry dry martini dry!!

Now, where was I - oh yes - on the train. We got off at Newcastle and after immigration and passport inspection was over we boarded the SS Leda of the Bergen Steamships. She was clean, sparkling white - and very nicely designed. About 7,000 tons, so there were no huge lounges or ballrooms. As a matter of fact, when one of us wanted to change, or get a suitcase out, the other one had to sit on the bed, or get out all together. The cabin was about 9' X 5'. We sailed at 4:00, spent most of the afternoon out on deck in the sun, had dinner and went to bed early. The next day, Joyce, Liz and Barb and I spent most of the morning playing Bridge, with the occasional peek out to see Norway approaching. We landed at 4:30 and were whisked

away to our hotel in Bergen. It was pouring rain, but we wanted to see the city, so we went walking. It seemed strange to hear a foreign language and see foreign signs. The shops were very nice, but there weren't very many. We noticed a lot of attractive side walk café's and their poet office was the last word in modern design. Most of the people we met spoke English fairly well, and there was no difficulty trying to make yourself understood.

That night our courier, Bob Ranz and the one boy, Rusty Wicko, planned to find a nightclub so that we could all go out, but we ended up walking the streets like sheep! We ended up in a restaurant where there was a quintet playing Norwegian folk music. We had beer and carried on until 11:00 and came home. In Norway it doesn't get dark until 11:30 or 12:00 and in some places it doesn't get dark (as we would call dark at home) at all. The next day we began our tour of Norway which would eventually bring us to Oslo.

Darling, I don't think I will try to explain the beauty we saw on our way North to Stolheim and Tyin. Breathtaking is the most expressive word. The mountains and the fjords, the narrow tunnels along the road cut through the mountains, and the panorama view of lush valleys but when you see the pictures we took you will be able to understand better the fact that there are just no words to describe the beauty. And all along the road, beside fields, were the handsome blond Norwegian people going about their work. They're so healthy and so good looking.

Our hotel in Stolheim was a ski resort nestled in the mountains 1,500 ft. high overlooking a beautiful valley. There were mountains all around us with more in the distance covered with snow. The hotel was lovely, huge stone fireplaces, sinky soft chairs, knotty pine walls with old copper pots hanging down, huge ceiling lights made from wrought iron, waitresses in native dress and everyone in gay holiday moods. We loved it.

The next day we started our trip to Tyin, by taking a steamer cruise on the Sognefjord, the largest fjord in Norway (140 miles). It was raining in spots so we played Bridge in those spots and dashed out on deck when there was a break in the weather. Again the scenery was beautiful; towering mountains on both sides, waterfalls tearing down from the very top on some, and tiny cottages sprinkled here and there. I thought what a wonderful honeymoon we could have there together. I wish you could see Norway.

We took the bus again at Laerdall and went on to Tyin. The scenery began to change. The mountains were higher and more rugged. There was more snow and less habitation. There were poles along the road to mark the way for snowploughs during the winter. Along one side of the mountains we travelled beside was an old Viking path. Even the old railings were there although in most places they had rusted away. We stopped at Borgund, an old Viking church, the oddest piece of architecture I've ever seen. It is 800 years old, made entirely of wood and it is very well preserved. It

almost looks like oriental at first, with the hand carvings of dragons and Gods. It was very interesting. When we got off the bus to go into the church, we almost froze to death. Suddenly we were “up north.” It was fantastic. Olaf, our Norwegian driver put the heat on and pretty soon the windows were all steamed. And believe it or not, when we were approaching our hotel, 3300 feet in the mountains, we ran into a snow storm. You would have thought none of us had seen snow before the way we pointed and stared. Just like a bus load of school children!

Our hotel was quite nice. It seemed to be the only building for miles, and I think we were the only guests staying there. Apparently it is only opened during the summer because after the first snowfall, they block the road off a few miles down. There were still patches of snow near the road, not to mention the snow on the tops and on the slopes. After supper, Bob, Rusty, Liz, and four others and I went mountain climbing we had a few snowball fights, and at 11:00 we were all sitting on a rock looking out over a lake and distant mountains when it started to snow again. We thought it would be quite a tale to tell - sitting on a mountain top - at 11:30 on July 10th, in daylight in the middle of a snow storm. Quite amazing.

The next morning we went on to Oslo. As we drove south again, the weather and scenery changed again. The snow capped mountains faded in the distance and greener timber-clad mountains came into view. It was a beautifully clear day - and the drive was one I'll never forget.

Our accommodation in Oslo was very nice. Student quarters in the winter, student tour accommodation in the summer. Really, the rooms are like apartments and the outside appearance is not unlike a modern Toronto apartment building. The beds tho' are like boards. You sit down on them for the first time and you don't bounce, just boom, no give at all.

Anne Jenssen, the Norwegian boy who was at Mount Allison, phoned us at the hotel and after supper at 9:00 he came to pick us up in his little German car. I meant to write down the name so I could tell you but I forgot - will all my washing and diary writing at night, before bed. We went for a drive about - up to a 250 foot ski jump, to a mountain resort and finally to a quaint old restaurant on the Oslo Fjord, overlooking the harbor. We had a lovely time and we really saw Norway from a foreigner, who was once a native. His English is slipping a little.

The next day was beautiful. We had an early breakfast and went downtown to do a bit of shopping. Many lovely things that I would have love to bought for our home, but I hate to spend the money. I keep thinking I will see something I like even better! I did buy a sweet little sterling silver Viking ship with an oar, to be used as a mustard or horseradish pot, or jar. I'm sewing crests of all the different cities and towns we visited, so I bought my 8th one of Oslo.

That afternoon we took a tour of the city and it turned out to be wonderful. Very interesting. I sat in the bus and scribbled notes furiously. We saw this Kon Tiki Raft which was amazingly small, considering the voyage it took. The tram and the Viking ships were interesting too and very nicely displayed.

Anne took us out again that evening for a short drive and that ended Oslo. It is a very interesting city - full of life and humdrum. There are lots of market squares and outdoor restaurants. The streets are clean and there are electric trams which are a lovely shade of blue. They have a subway, running north and south, and the population is about 506,000. There are no skyscrapers or tall buildings. The business section is not clear, as it is in Toronto. All the stores and apartments and offices are together, and the buildings are quite old architecture, but they are kept up so well that nothing looks shabby or old.

There are no night clubs in Oslo and everything closes at 11:00. People aren't allowed to drink hard liquor on Saturday because Sunday is a holiday and no one can drink on this day before a holiday. Therefore the bad night in Oslo is Friday. About 6 for us so maybe when we get to Copenhagen there will be a surprise for us. It seems so strange not to have a letter from you in all this time? I miss it and I would so much like to see "I Love You."

Darling, my wonderful darling, I love you so terribly. I want you so much. Right now I wish you were here beside me. I pray for you at night, for success, and happiness, and you are always my last sweet thought before dropping off to sleep.

Tonight I want to look at your picture awhile and then dream about you. Your birthday is on July 19th and I want this letter to be your present for the time being. Happy Birthday Darling.

All my love,
Yours forever and ever.

Ann

Nice, France
August 14th 1958

My Darling, Darling Love,

I've been on pins and needles waiting for a letter from you and finally today two came - one written July 18 - and the other on July 23rd. It certainly was a wonderful thrill to get them. That makes four letters from you since I've been away. Just think, darling, - soon we won't have to worry about visiting one another - we'll be together always - as man and wife.

The last time I wrote, I think we were in Rome. The following day, which was our first day there, we took an all day sightseeing tour of the city. Never have I seen so many works of art. Every fountain is a masterpiece. All the buildings are in the Baroque style and the streets are wide, and the squares quite large, I got the impression that Rome is a very cold city. There doesn't seem to be the sparkle and glamour that other Italian cities and towns have. There are beautiful Roman ruins everywhere. The Forum is completely ruined, except for three columns. The Colosseum is huge but I was quite disappointed in it. In movies it seems more romantic and mysterious. I imagine if you had been with me and we had gone by buggy to the Colosseum by night and had sat on the steps, it would have given me a completely different impression. We saw Three Coins in a Fountain, and made our wish to come back, I had my fingers crossed as well. Then of course, St. Peter's Square and church, which is really something,. It is immense - but again not so large as the movies make it. The church is a spectacle - highly decorated and very very Catholic of course! We saw Mussolini's Balcony and his headquarters, the Borghese Park, the San Callisto Catacombs, the Baths of Caracalla, and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. That night we went to see Tosca at the Baths of Caracalla which is another Roman ruin. It was so thrilling to sit there under the stars and face an immense stage set in between two jagged pieces of Roman stone walls. The opera was good. Orchestra very enjoyable, but the people behind us were obnoxious - a Nouveau Riche American family!

The next day we visited the Vatican Museum but we were just whisked through. I missed half the things the guide was saying because I was still lingering over the one thing when she'd be talking about something else. However, it was very interesting and very beautiful. The Sistine Chapel with the ceiling done by Michaelangelo was beautiful. I loved it. We saw the Raphael rooms which were also very beautiful. All this was so familiar to me as we studied it in art history classes. That afternoon we rested and did a washing - (the everlasting flow of wash!) And then Barb and I went downtown. As we were walking along one of the main streets, two Italians planted themselves at our sides and it took us a good two hours to get rid

of them. They were like leaches. We tried everything except a fist fight. Finally we spotted our bus and jumped on! Italian buses stop for a second and then they're off. If you don't get on fast you get your nose cut in the door. It's too bad, we left them standing there blowing kisses. The men are absolutely fools.

Next day we had a leisure - August 9th, so we spent nearly every hour of it at the Olympic Swimming Pool - Piscina, which was just down a little way from our hotel. It was tremendous - very large - very little chlorine and a beautiful patio to sit on after a swim. We all got terrific burns and Liz was sick all night from too much on her face. Irene and I were rather headachy but we managed to go on a night buggy ride through the old Roman ruins, Colosseum, Forum, without mishap.

August to Paris. I gave up with the word mishaps. It's amazing how suddenly I can just drop off. My eyes just refuse to stay open and my hand gives out then - no sooner is my head on the pillow than I'm in dreamland. Quite a few people have been sick because of bad food, and over tiredness. Liz has had a spell of on the bus today and I wasn't feeling too chipper. We're all a wreck but there are only a few more days so I think we can struggle through and then rest on the ship.

The day we left Rome, we passed through very beautiful country side on our way to Florence along the Toscana Road. It was very hot and dry at first, nothing but yellow earth, a few poor farmhouses and blazing hot sun. It was strange and very lovely I thought. We were almost grease spots by the time we reached Siena, a funny little town all crowded together around one Cathedral, and then their town hall. It was a real test for our driver to get through the narrow streets. The scenery changed after Siena - and the hills were greener and more bush with vineyards, olive trees, Cyprus trees and beautiful villas, very very picturesque. Italy is certainly a gorgeous, magnificent country, full of mouth watering beaches, two lovely Seas, the Adriatic Mediterranean, beautiful countryside, and a wonderful climate. They haven't had rain in four months! We stayed at a very good hotel, The Mediterraneo Hotel. We had a shower and a bath, a huge balcony with comfortable beds and two easy chairs. This was in Florence - a city I liked better than Rome - home of Michaelangelo and Leonardo Da Vinci. A shoppers paradise and a artist's heaven. The streets were hysterical - very narrow and twisty - and all along the shopkeepers with their wares hanging outside. When Liz and I were shopping on August 11, we bumped into Carolyn Potter and Judy Giffin, a girl from Mount Allison, They were touring on their own after having been in Yugoslavia all summer on a WVSC Seminar. Did you know that Carolyn was engaged to Pete McGregor - the med student. They are being married in September!! I don't know how she is going to do it, she begins to wonder that herself. Peter is with Dr. Murray Fraser, so they will be moving to Halifax.

Next day we were off to Genoa, via Pisa. The Leaning Tower is really leaning, and for once, it looks more spectacular when you really see it than it does in pictures. We walked to the top, and when we first started out I thought I was going to be sick.

It gives you a very odd sensation. The Baptistry was lovely - perfectly round with a beautiful roof. A man was there to sing every five minutes so we stayed and listened while sang notes at different intervals, paused while they echoed and blended so making a sound exactly like a full choir on and on again. It was fascinating! At 3:00 between Pisa and La Spezia, we stopped for a swim in the Mediterranean, and darling, it was really something. The Apennines in the background, the blue blue water, white sand, colorful umbrellas and beach chairs, ah such bliss! The water is just right and very buoyant, and not too salty - the Adriatic is very salty. It was late when we reached Genoa, so we passed a great many small towns; Chiavari, Rapallo and San Margareta at night. They were all lovely - right down to the water, built along the curve of a hill. Genoa, a port as far as I am concerned, a dump, filthy dirty, rushed and not at all attractive. We left the next day for Nice - and again didn't arrive until quite late. We just fell into bed - to the music of a steel drum band - much gaiety, and street dancing. Nice is very noisy, and gay spot, but I wouldn't want to stay there too long.

The next day of course we spent in the water. The Riviera near Nice is all very stony and there is quite a strong under tow as you get your feet in the water. A breaker will come and suck you out - when you put your feet down to touch there is no bottom - you are above your head when you are about four feet out. Getting out of the water was just as bad. Timing was essential! We saw many sights, such as men and women changing on the beach, bikini bathing suits on both men and women, naked children everywhere and anything, love making - it was a wonderful day!! That night they had a little celebration called the Battle of Flowers. There were gorgeous floats all done in flowers and then after, everyone walked the streets throwing confetti at everyone, policemen, old and young. It was a scream to see all these old men walking about, pushing their way through the crowd to throw a handful of confetti in some pretty girl's face. The French are absolutely mad! There were spectacular fireworks displays afterwards.

The next day, one by one the pins began to fall and we were stopping the bus for this and that person to be ill. We drove along the French Riviera, the Cate d'Azur to Monte Carlo & Monaco. Both absolutely for the birds. Prince Rainier has a beautiful view from his castle, but the castle itself is very dull and disappointing. Grace had better order it to be painted! The next two days I won't even bother telling you about because I have your letter about the apartment, darling, and I want to talk about it. I can't believe that you have found a home for us. I keep reading your letter trying to imagine it and dying to see it. I'm so excited sweetheart. I can just picture us in it, sleeping in a green or blue room, cooking in a yellow kitchen. It's all marvellous sweetie. I would love to see it before I go home so I can have some idea of how we can decorate, Will you be able to meet me? What do you want to do? Maybe you had better send a cablegram to the ship HMS Saxonia Cabin 11, A Deck.

If you have written to me about it, and you think it will arrive before we leave Paris, don't bother of course. I am hoping you will be able to meet me tho'.

Darling, I must go to sleep. I wish you were here to hold me. I need you so much, the warmth of your body, your arms, and your kiss. I love you so very much. Just think, in a couple of months we will be together forever. We've waited so long darling. Soon we will be able to lay together with no fears, and no tensions.

All my love,
Yours always and always,

Ann

P.S. The Eiffel Tower is just outside our window. It is all lit up and is simply magnificent. Beautiful.

Titano Hotel
San Marino
August 2nd 1958

Finally we have the night when I can sit down and write. I've been trying to squeeze it in for over a week, but ever since we left Stockholm we've been on the go. We're going to be perfect wrecks by the time we board the ship in France.

Barb and I are sitting in a tiny balcony overlooking one of the tiny winding streets of this picturesque town. The weather has been ghastly hot, you can't move without causing a sweat shower. Our bus is poorly ventilated, and we just sit and sigh - mop our brows - and long for the next swim in the Adriatic. It has been 114° and 110°, and today a little cooler at 105°. The humidity is terrific so you can see we are really getting a taste of native weather. I bought some slides in Venice yesterday from a very nice Italian (They are few and far between and I asked him if this was unusual weather - and he said with a slow painful yop, "Yes, we usually have a breeze.")

I hate to say it, but the last time I wrote you darling, we were in Stockholm, Sweden. Since then we've been through Denmark, Amsterdam, Holland, Brussels, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and now here we are in Italy. If I write in detail, I'll be sitting here in the same chair for the rest of the night. I want to talk about our wedding plans, and apartment, so darling, this is what you call a whirlwind travelogue!

I loved Stockholm, sweetie, I don't know how to describe it, but it certainly was appealing. In the city, any important buildings which are constructed always have copper roofs. In time of course, these roofs turn pale green. They are very attractive, and so different. The harbor is beautiful and not like Montreal or Halifax. I don't even remember noticing any sheds. If there are any they are possibly covered with flowers, boxes, or a new white stone building. The hospital in Stockholm is so huge that the nurses have to deliver their medicines on bicycles. After window shopping that afternoon, we all went out to a place called Saltsjobaden, a resort on the Baltic Sea. It was a lovely spot. We had drinks and a delicious dinner. We decided to visit an open air amusement park, so went to Skansen. It was horrible, but rather interesting to see the people as they really are. The girls are beautiful but the men are only so-so. It would be a paradise for young bachelors.

The next day, Liz and I went shopping and I ended up by buying 6 wine goblets. They are very simple and quite tall. They are a pale wine color. I hope you will like them. That night we left Stockholm by train, heading for Denmark. The trains are very comfortable and very fast. We were met in Frederikshaun after a boat trip. And on we went. In Randers that night we went out and had a fabulous time. The Danish people are terrific, gay, happy and good looking, and they love music. That

night we stayed up until 4:30am, and the next night it was the same thing, out to a nightclub called Casanova. We all want to go back.

Copenhagen!! Where I wouldn't mind spending the rest of my days! You would love it too, darling. It's old, new, fascinating, and so romantic. We took a very skimpy tour of the city, but a wonderful; tour of the canals and the harbor. That night as we were leaving by train, everyone was hanging out of the windows very wistfully looking back. It's amazing how a few days in a city is enough to make you want to keep going back again and again. We took a boat train to Amsterdam and crossed the longest bridge in Europe (2 miles long), the Kline. We arrived in Amsterdam the next morning and were out walking right away. Our hotel was right on the main street and what a street it is - the Kaalvastgate. It is only about 7 feet wide and the mobs of people walk all over the place. When a car wants to get through it has to crawl and blast its way through. Everyone moves very slowly. No one seems to ever think of getting a bump or worse still, getting killed. The canals are lovely. Entirely different from Venice. They're wider, cleaner, not as busy, and of course there are no Gondolas and garbage. Irene was captivated, but I would rather have Copenhagen or Lucerne. We visited Vollendam, a tiny fishing village outside Amsterdam. The Dutch people were dressed in their native costumes, but it was so commercial. Every store was dripping with souvenirs and delf, and the owners were out on the streets imploring you to come in and buy. I liked the windmills, the dykes, and the old fishing boats. We went to the ballet one night and loved it. I didn't buy a thing in Amsterdam, but speaking of buying, I made a big purchase in Copenhagen - stainless steel Dansk. I will enclose the pattern. I think it was the one you liked. It is heavy, comfortable to hold, and very good looking. I bought 4-6 piece place settings and it cost me \$32.00 I sent it home, so you won't see it until you come down for the wedding.

Darling, I miss you so much. It's so romantic over here. I think we should save our money (to heck with furniture) and come over together soon. We could rent a car and travel and have a glorious time. What do you think?

Brussels was next. The World's Fair of course was the most spectacular thing I've seen in my life. The Atomium at night was a treat to the eyes. We went up to the middle sphere by night and through portholes which were spaced along the spokes leading to the different spheres. You could look out and down on the lights below. Liz went around snapping pictures like mad the next day. So when we get them I will go into detail. It's so hard to find the words to describe everything we saw on paper. We had lunch the next day at the Canadian Pavilion, and was very impressed. It is a lovely building. The American building was gaudy - but very well planned. They exhibited color TV, Cinerama, wide lens pictures and magnetic hands, and of course fashion and modern appliances, a bit of art and culture. The Russian building had everything and it was a real display. There was a huge statue of Lenin which noone could miss, a life size copy of the Sputnik, food displays, magazines, art, education,

farming, sports - everything imaginable.

“Imaginable” was the last word I would write that night. The little waiter was getting a bit itchy about clearing up the tables. It is August 4th and we are in a very nice hotel in Sorrento. More about Sorrento and Southern Italy later. Now back to Brussels. Barb and I lost Irene and Liz somewhere along the way, so we continued our tour to the Fair. We went to the American Theatre and saw the Yale Glee Club. They were excellent, but I was getting restless just thinking of all the things outside yet to see, and the short time we had to see them in. We took a cable car over part of the grounds, went riding around in a motor bike, they had little seats in front and they were a great little rig. We stayed all day at the Fair and left at 11:30 that night, stopping for some Dortmunder Beer on the way home. The next day we went tearing out of the hotel to buy some Belgian lace. It was really quite funny. We were literally running along the streets. I bought some beautiful guest towels for our bedroom. I just love them. They are ecru with a lovely bit of lace on the bottom, simple, and beautiful. That afternoon we drove through Belgium to Germany, saw the battlefields and small town, war torn villages, and that was about all. There are beautiful valleys and sloping hills, but nothing too exciting. As soon as we crossed the German border, it was nothing but woods and cars, terrific roads, Hitler era fountains, and parks and more cars! Cologne is a fascinating city. Still many many buildings in rubble, whole blocks in fact, but the downtown area is all new, very modern and so well designed. The stores! I could have gone broke. Rusty, Barb, Joyce, Liz, and I went to a nightclub called the Weindorf. They had a tremendous floor show and we drank Rhine wine and had a great time. Liz got rather tidly and we were doubled up in stitches all the way home. She was just like a record player. The next day we went through Bonn, saw the place where Dulles was to meet Adenauer that afternoon. Beethoven’s house and then to Koblenz where we took the steamer to Bingen, down the Rhine. It was lovely, really a sight, the old castles perched on top of hills and cliffs, with the vineyards stretching below. The in Bingen a funny old bus met us and on we went to a beer cellar, met up with some Americans stationed there, talked for awhile, sang, and then left. Next day on to Switzerland, beautiful Switzerland, another paradise for lovers. We stayed in a very nice hotel in Lucerne, and the minute we put our feet on the main street overlooking Lake Lucerne, Mt. Pilate and other surrounding peaks I fell in love with it. There are few canals, the architecture, which is probably German Boroque, is so quaint and colorful. The people friendly and always so gay. They speak German and French, and in the southern part, all Italian. I bought Sandy a Swiss hat. I pondered and pondered and finally threw up my hands and bought one, don’t tell him! The next day, about 14 of us went on an excursion up Mt. Atalis. We went up on a railway, and down via cable cars. The view from the top - 7000 feet, was really breathtaking, we could see Germany and the peaks of Yunfrau (sp). The cable car down was terrible until you became accustomed to the height and

the idea that you were safe. I kept reassuring myself that if the cable should snap, we would land in reed. I enjoyed it and was disappointed when we had to get off. That night we went to a place called Stadkeller, at Lucerne. It was fun but too many tourists.

The following day we went through the beautiful Rotthard Pass and went down the mountains 7,000 feet by bus. When we were down, we realized that we were almost in Italy. The people look and speak Italian. Even the architecture and streets were similar. Then suddenly we were in Italy and the thermometer shot up to 107°. We stopped at a very nice hotel with a wrought iron balcony, and the Lake of Maggiore right at our feet. Our first thought was to get in, so we did. And although the water was warm, we felt refreshed. The next day we motored along the shores of this lake, saw all the lovely villas and homes, boats, people in swimming, I've never looked so longingly at water before in my life. Finally after we had registered, and were settled in a lovely hotel overlooking the lake, we got into our bathing suits and in we plunged. We stayed in for about an hour. The water was warm but quite refreshing. Next day we went along the shores of this lake and on to Venice, Italy. There is always something to look at along the way. The beaches and mountains are beautiful and everyone is so healthy and tan. We entered Venice by boat and went straight to Lido where our hotel was. Our room was looking out over a canal and while we were getting ready for dinner, there was a young boy loading a boat, singing and having a great time! Everyone sings, very loudly and strongly and when it is quiet, around 1:00, you can hear men's voices singing all different songs, mellow in tone. It's very romantic.

The next day we had a sightseeing tour of the Doge Palace but it was so hot and the guide was so old that Barb & Liz and I decided to sneak away. We went over the Bridge of Sighs and escaped all the back way. Did a little shopping and then took a Gondola for a spin. Lots of fun. The canals are dirty and most of them are smelly. The houses are poor, dirty little children running around, but all this was just plain old life, we loved it. That night we had a Gondola party with musicians, song and a full moon. Rusty bought a bottle of wine. We took the straw bottom off and used it as a hat every time we lifted the bottle (we forgot cups!). We sang as the musicians in their Gondolas played. It lasted for about two hours and we had a marvellous time.

Next day, in scorching heat, we drove to San Marino, the most beautiful little place - it's almost mysterious, set way up in the mountains overlooking farmlands and other smaller mountains. The streets are about as wide as a Bloor Street sidewalk and all the stores have half their goods dripping from windows, stands, and doorways. They have a rip roaring tourist trade.

The next day was hot again, but we followed the Adriatic coast nearly all the way. So there was a bit of a breeze. Had to stop twice for flat tires, but we finally made it to L'Aquila, a little town in the mountains. It was much cooler up there. It

was 11:00 when we finished dinner so we all retired early. The next day, into Sorrento, passing some of the loveliest scenery yet. The Bay of Naples is really something to see. Steep cliffs rising from the blue water, stone houses in all colors, on every rock or ledge, beaches below, and the city of Naples in the background. We went past Vesuvius and along further to Sorrento, another lovely town on the Mediterranean coast. We took an excursion the next day to Capri and I got the worst sunburn I've ever had. I'm suffering right now. I'm afraid I'm going to blister. I had to borrow a Gondoliers hat for protection, sandals for cool feet. So now I am a true native. We spent a wonderful day shopping and looking. You'll have to see about buying a villa here, darling, what a paradise! The water without exaggerating is the shade of washable blue ink, very clear and very refreshing.

Today on our way to Rome, we stopped for two hours at Pompeii. A very interesting visit. It was terribly hot, but I think we're getting used to it. I met Helen Wickeirre among the ruins with her group. We're in Rome now, but we haven't seen anything or done anything yet. Tomorrow we have an all day tour of the city and Tuesday in the evening we're going to the open air opera in Tosca.

Darling, I've been meaning to tell you that I bought my bridesmaid material in London. It is green, stiff material. I got it on sale at Marshall's & Snelgrove on Oxford St. Quite something eh? If I can find the sample piece I'll enclose it. Wedding - please hurry up and come. I can hardly wait sweetie. Will you be able to meet me at the dock in Montreal on the morning of the 27th? I hope so.

G'night my darling love. I love you with all my heart.
Will see you soon.

XXOO Ann

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